

(Monroe Institute Blog - October 8, 2009)

ON THE STRANGE BUT INTERESTING SIDE . . .

by Skip Atwater

On November 6, a movie called “Men Who Stare at Goats” arrives in theaters. This movie is based on a book, of the same title, by Jon Ronson. As an author, Ronson has a distinctive self-deprecating reporting style, which is written subjectively, often including himself as part of the story via a first-person narrative. The style tends to blend factual and fictional elements to emphasize an underlying message and engage the audience. His stories often detail his process of information gathering and he is usually quite visible as a character . . . as is his persona, Bob Wilton, in the movie version of “Goats.” Ronson tends to favor style over accuracy and often uses personal experiences and emotions to provide context while striving for the gritty factor; being truthful without an emphasis on objectivity.

Ronson’s book critically (in the tradition of the British press) debunks much of the work of the First Earth Battalion, the US Army’s experimental unit focused on advance human potentials. The movie of the same name promises to be quite entertaining, humorous, and somewhat kinder than Ronson’s book. I am really looking forward to seeing it. Remember, however, that The First Earth Battalion had nothing to do with STAR GATE, the intelligence community’s remote-viewing program.

The back-story, the research Ronson did for the book “Men Who Stare at Goats,” exceeds the fascination of “Goats” itself. Part of his research involved Ronson visiting The Monroe Institute, a place where ordinary people can experience extraordinary things. You see, Ronson wanted to actually experience for himself the expanded human potentials he was investigating. He wanted to know beyond doubt if what Bob Monroe had said, “The greatest illusion is that humankind has limitations,” was really true!

While Ronson was at the Institute he wanted to do an experiment. Although this happened a number of years ago – circa 2002 – I recently came across the original audio recording of his experimental booth session. Take a look at the link, below, and keep it in mind when you see the movie, “Men Who Stare at Goats,” in November.

When Jon Ronson saw this on YouTube, he offered the following public comments:

“Lovely to see Skip. In my recollection the out-of-body portion of the day worked a treat. I really had some kind of OBE at The Monroe Institute.”

“But I was less sure about the success of the remote-viewing section. It took me a long time to identify the target, and though I got there in the end, I had some wrong guesses along the way.”

“But the out-of-body section was a very pleasant success, and I often tell people what an experience it was, floating around the room that day long ago at Monroe.”